

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 17397

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS ON CURRENT ITALIAN
DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: A. ROME 17340; B. ROME 16787; C. ROME 17323

1. IN MY FIRST CALL ON PRIME MINISTER MORO FOLLOWING
INSTALLATION OF HIS FOURTH GOVERNMENT, I OPENED THE CON-
VERSATION BY CONGRATULATING HIM ON THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION
OF A REALLY TOUGH JOB. THE CRISIS WAS OF RECORD LENGTH,
AND IF IT COULD BE MEASURED, PERHAPS OF RECORD DIFFICULTY.
I SAID HIS HANDLING OF THE CRISIS WAS A FIRST-CLASS
DEMONSTRATION OF HIS WELL-KNOWN CAPACITY TO BE TENACIOUS,
BUT AT THE SAME TIME WILLING WHERE APPROPRIATE TO COMPROMISE
WHILE HOLDING TO HIS PRINCIPLES. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS
CLEAR STATEMENT OF CONTINUITY OF ITALIAN POLICY WITH REGARD
TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE (REFTEL B.). I TOLD HIM THAT I
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HAD WATCHED HIS ENTIRE PRESENTATION BEFORE THE SENATE, AND

WAS IMPRESSED WITH HIS VIGOROUS, ELOQUENT AND CONVINCING DELIVERY.

2. MORO TOOK MY COMMENTS IN THE SINCERE VEIN IN WHICH THEY WERE OFFERED AND SAID THAT HIS EMPHASIS IN DELIVERY WAS A DIRECT REFLECTION OF HIS OWN CONVICTION THAT THIS POLITICAL FORMULA AND THIS FOURTH MORO GOVERNMENT SIMPLY HAS TO SUCCEED. HE REFERRED TO THE FRACTIOUSNESS OF BOTH THE SOCIALISTS (PSI) AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI) AND SAID THAT MUCH FOREBEARANCE AND DETERMINATION HAD BEEN REQUIRED IN DEALING WITH BOTH PARTIES. HE HAD DONE IT AND HE WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE THE RESULT WORK.

3. I REMINDED MORO THAT IN MY TRAVELS IN ITALY OUTSIDE ROME I HEAR A GREAT MANY INTERESTING POINTS OF VIEW ON WHAT GOES ON IN THE CAPITAL. I TOLD HIM THAT EARLIER THE EXPECTATIONS EXPRESSED TO ME HAD INDICATED THE POSSIBILITY OF A RENEWED CABINET CRISIS ANYTIME AFTER EPIPHANY. NOW, HOWEVER, I HAVE DETECTED INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN THE FOURTH MORO GOVERNMENT. I ASKED HIM HOW THIS SQUARES WITH THE FLAT STATEMENTS FROM SOCIALIST LEADERS (BOTH DE MARTINO AND MANCINI) THAT THE CENTER-LEFT FORMULA IS DEAD.

4. MORO SAID THAT DESPITE THE PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS OF SOME, THE RECENT POSTPONEMENT OF THE PSI CONGRESS UNTIL THE AUTUMN OF 1975 MEANS THAT THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT CAN CONTINUE TO ENJOY PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT THROUGH THE SUMMER. IN ADDITION TO THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS WHICH ARE DUE IN THE LATE SPRING, MORO IS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE PROBLEMS HIS GOVERNMENT WILL FACE, INCLUDING POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION WITH THE UNIONS AND METHODS TO DEAL WITH THE UNDERLYING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. MORO SAID THAT THE PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, BUT THAT A FIGHT HAD TO BE MADE AND HE WAS PREPARED TO MAKE IT.

5. WITH REGARD TO THE LONGER TERM FUTURE OF THE CENTER-LEFT FORMULA, MORO SAID THIS WOULD DEPEND A VERY GREAT DEAL ON THE AUTUMN CONGRESS OF THE PSI (WHICH HAS NOW BEEN SET FOR OCTOBER). MORO IS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE TOUGH LEFT-WING LINE WHICH FORMED THE SETTING FOR DE MARTINO'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE REITERATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE FOURTH MORO
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GOVERNMENT (REFTEL C.). NEVERTHELESS, MORO SAID, ONE MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT THE OLD SOCIALIST LEADER PIETRO NENNI HAS RECENTLY TAKEN POSITIONS MUCH TO THE LEFT OF HIS GENERAL STANCE BETWEEN 1956 AND THE PRESENT. DE MARTINO CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO TAKE POSITIONS WHICH MIGHT LEAVE HIS OWN LEFT FLANK EXPOSED BY NENNI'S LEFTWARD SHIFT. IN OTHER WORDS, NENNI'S NOTICEABLE SWING TO THE LEFT IN RECENT MONTHS NOT ONLY PERMITS BUT ALSO DICTATES A MORE

LEFT-WING DE MARTINO LINE. MORO SAID MUCH WILL DEPEND ON HIS GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE AND SUCCESS BETWEEN NOW AND THE OCTOBER PSI CONGRESS. WHEN ALL THE RETURNS ARE IN, INCLUDING THE OCTOBER PSI CONGRESS RESULTS, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO ASSESS FUTURE CENTER-LEFT PROSPECTS, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER 4-PARTY QTE ORGANIC UNQTE CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENTS.

6. COMMENT: IT IS INTERESTING THAT MORO LINKS DE MARTINO'S LEFTWARD SHIFT TO A SIMILAR DRIFT TO THE LEFT BY NENNI. AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, IS THE FACT THAT DE MARTINO CANNOT EXPOSE HIS LEFT FLANK TO ATTACK BY MANCINI, WHO IS THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE TO CHALLENGE DE MARTINO'S LEADERSHIP IF IT IS CHALLENGED IN THE PSI OCTOBER CONGRESS. THE TRUTH IS THAT ALL FACTIONS OF THE PSI AGREE THAT THE TIME IS RIPE TO PRESS FOR A FURTHER LEFTWARD ORIENTATION OF ITALIAN POLITICS, ALTHOUGH NOT IN THE FORM OF A DC-PCI QTE HISTORIC COMPROMISE UNQTE WHICH MIGHT LESSEN THE ROLE OF THE SOCIALISTS.

7. AS A FINAL COMMENT, IT IS INTERESTING THAT MORO BELIEVES HIS CURRENT GOVERNMENT MAY HOLD ITS PARLIAMENTARY BASE TOGETHER UNTIL (BUT NOT NECESSARILY AFTER) THE PSI CONGRESS. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT, DURING THE RECENT CRISIS, SOME WHO SUPPORTED MORO'S EFFORTS TO PUT TOGETHER A ONE-PARTY DC GOVERNMENT ARGUED FOR SUCH A SHIFT TO THE LEFT BECAUSE IT WOULD EASE THE STRAINS WITHIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY UNTIL AFTER THE PSI CONGRESS, WHICH WAS THEN EXPECTED TO BE HELD IN THE EARLY SPRING OF 1975. AFTER THE PSI CONGRESS, IT WAS ARGUED, THE SOCIALISTS WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY IN GOVERNMENT, AND POSSIBILITIES WOULD THUS BE BRIGHTER FOR A RETURN TO A FOUR-PARTY CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT AT THAT TIME. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS DURING THE CRISIS TOOK THE BRUNT OF

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REJECTING THIS ARGUMENT. THEY INSISTED THAT THE PSI CONGRESS WOULD NOT EASE THE STRAINS WITHIN THE PSI, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT THAT PSI POSITIONS MIGHT BE RADICALIZED THEREBY. WHAT MORO APPEARS TO BE SAYING TODAY IS THAT THIS LATTER PSDI VIEW WAS PROBABLY CORRECT. VOLPE

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